

[Caesar Ernst]

S241 - [PLA?] [DUP?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER [Eilert Mohlman?] ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE Nov. 28, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Caesar Ernst, 1922, 10 St., Columbus, Neb
2. Date and time of interview Nov. 28, 1938 2-4 P.M.
3. lace of interview At his home
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Living room well and comfortably furnished house modern well kept, on graveled street. [????]

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Neb.

DATE Nov. 28, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Caesar Ernst, 1922 10th St. Columbus, Nebr.

1. Ancestry Swiss

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2. Place and date of birth [Berne?], Switzerland, January 8, 1862.
3. Family Wife, 5 children all living; 5 grand children
4. Place lived in, with dates [Berne?], Switzerland, 1862-1882; farm 1882-1918; Columbus, Nebr., 1918 to date.
5. Education, with dates Public schools from 1868-1877
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farm hand 1882-1885 General farming and stock raising 1885-1918.
7. Special skills and interests Farming and stock raising
8. Community and religious activities Member German Reformed Church many years a member of church board.
9. Description of informant A man of small but rugged physique; about 5' tall, weight 150[?]
10. Other points gained in interview Mr. Ernst has lived in Columbus now about 20 years. He has always been engaged in farming, and has gained a gratifying measure of success in his chosen occupation and has also won the high regard of his fellowmen.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus Neb

DATE Nov. 28, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Caesar Ernst, 1922 10th St., Columbus Neb.

When I was a young man I always worked on a farm at home. We had about twenty acres and I would also help out among the neighbors. When about twenty years old I came to

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America, coming direct to Duncan, Nebraska, to my uncle, Julius Ernst, who was farming near there. I stayed with him for three years working as a hired hand, and then rented some of his land for two years, when his son-in-law came and moved on the farm. Then I got a job on the section where I worked for eleven months getting \$1.40 a day, but when they cut my pay to \$1.25 a day I quit and went back to farming, renting a place on the "Island" which is between the South and North Platte river. I got married then in the fall of 1888. We did not live on the "Island" very long when I bought a 120 acre farm from my father-in-law and moved into the "Gruetli" neighborhood where we lived for three years. Then bought a farm three miles east of Duncan and stayed there eight years, then bought another farm 4 1/2 miles southwest of Columbus. This last place we built up and lived there about sixteen years when we retired and moved to Columbus.

In those early days we always had bad snowstorms. They would last about three days at a time. I remember when I was working as a hired man we had a bad storm, the drifts were twelve feet high; we had to take the roof off the corn crib so we could get at the corn and get the snow out. We had a lot of cattle that winter and we had to tie the hay in bundles in the hay loft and then "schlep" it to the cattle, there was so much snow that we could not use a team and wagon. We could not get any mail for two weeks. One couple got married there and they could not get to their home until the storm was over.

My wife, she came here first from Illinois [when?] she was two years old, tells me that in 1871, 1872 and 1873 the grasshoppers were very bad, they would come so thick that you could hardly see the sun; they were from a quarter of an inch to five inches long, and they would eat everything that there was green, big cabbage heads, all young garden stuff and cornstalks just a little left sticking out of the ground. They would not stay very long as it did not take very long to clean every thing up and when they left there would not be anything green left.

We thought everybody in the State knew we were deaf. But once in a while we find one who is not aware of the fact. A female book peddler came to the office the other day. She

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wished to dispose of a book. She was alone in the world, and had no one to whom she could turn for sympathy or assistance; hence we should buy her book. She had received a liberal education, and could talk French like a native; we could not, in consequence, pay her less than \$2.00 for a book. We had listened attentively, and here broke in with — “What did you say? We're deaf.” She started in a loud voice, and went through her rigmarole. When she had finished, we went and got a roll of paper, make it into a speaking trumpet, one end to our ear, and told her to proceed. She nearly broke a blood vessel in her efforts to make herself heard.

She commenced: “I am alone in the world.”

“It doesn't make the slightest difference to us. We are a husband and a father. Bigamy is not allowed in this State. We are not eligible to proposals.” “Oh what a fool that man is!” she said in a low tone; then at the top of her voice, “I don't want to marry you, I want to sell a b-o-o-k!” This last sentence was howled.

“We don't want a cook,” we remarked blandly; “our wife does the cooking, and she would not allow as good looking a woman was you are to stay in the house five minutes.” She looked at us in despair, gathering her robes about her, gave a glance of contempt, she exclaimed: “I do believe that if a three-hundred pounder were let off alongside of that deaf fool's head he'd think somebody was knocking at the door.”